

## Message Text

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ACTION HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 OES-05 PRS-01 PA-02 USIA-15 NAS-01

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R 220321Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6263

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DEPT PASS TO FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO, JA

SUBJECT: JAPANESE REACTIONS TO FDA ACTION ON RED DYE NO. 2

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, FDA'S BAN ON RED DYE NO. 2 HAS "UPSET" MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE (MHW) OFFICIALS CONCERNED WHO HAVE LONG ACCEPTED THE RED DYE AS SAFE. RESULTS OF TESTS CONDUCTED BY NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HYGIENICS SCIENCE IN 1973 CONFIRMED SAFETY OF THE RED DYE. THE 1974 CONCLUSION OF US NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE ESTABLISHING ITS SAFETY REINFORCED MHW'S CONFIDENCE.

LATEST FDA ANNOUNCEMENT, HOWEVER, HAS PROMPTED MHW TO REVIEW THIS PARTICULAR RED DYE; STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO OBTAIN FDA REPORT ON WHICH ITS ACTION OF JANUARY 19 WAS BASED AND HAVE IT STUDIED BY NIHS. FOLLOWING THIS, FOOD SANITATION RESEARCH COUNCIL, ADVISORY BODY

TO MINISTER OF HEALTH AND WELFARE, WILL BE ASKED TO RECOMMEND ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT.

2. JAPAN CONSUMERS UNION WAS QUICK IN REACTING TO FDA ACTION. ON JANUARY 20, ITS SENT A QUESTIONNAIRE TO 176 MAJOR FOODSTUFFS, COSMETICS AND DRUG MANUFACTURERS, AS WELL AS DEPARTMENT STORES AND SUPER MARKETS, ASKING THEM WHETHER THEY ARE READY TO SUSPEND USE OF THE DYE IN QUESTION. THEY ARE ASKED TO RESPOND

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TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE BY JANUARY 30. THE UNION WILL ALSO FORMALLY

ASK MHW TO IMMEDIATELY BAN USE OF THE COLORING AGENT. IN JAPAN, ANNUAL OUTOUT OF RED DYE NO. 2 REPORTEDLY AMOUNTS TO 40 TO 50 TONS. IT HAS BEEN WIDELY USED HERE SINCE BEFORE WORLD WAR II IN FOODS AND COSMETICS. ITS USE HAS BEEN BANNED IN 17 COMMODITIES. THEY INCLUDE SOY SAUCE, SOYBEAN FLOUR, BEANS, MEAT, LAYER AND PICKLES.

4. INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS OF COLORING AGENTS IS TAKING NON-COMMITTAL ATTITUDE. INDUSTRY SPOKESMAN TOLD PRESS THAT INDUSTRY MIGHT VOLUNTARILY DISCONTINUE PRODUCTION OF THE RED DYE AT ITS OWN DISCRETION EVEN BEFORE MHW COMES UP WITH ITS CONCLUSION ON MATTER.

5. EMBASSY HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY SHIZUOKA PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT TODAY TO OBTAIN FDA REPORT ON RED DYE NO. 2 AS WELL AS STATEMENT RELATIVE TO ACTION. IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF DEPARTMENT WOULD AIRPOUCH THESE DOCUMENTS TO OFFICE OF SCIENTIFIC COUNSELOR AT ITS EARLIEST CONVENIENCE.  
SHOESMITH

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